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THE MILITARY AND NAVAL SITUATION,

AND THE

GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS

OF OUR

SOLDIERS AND SAILORS,

BY WM. SWINTON, WASHINGTON EDITOR N. Y. TIMES.

I.

THE COURSE AND CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

A wise maxim of the greatest general of antiquity prescribes that we should esteem nothing done till it is all done; but it is probable that its intent is rather to point out the danger of that indolent dwelling on the deeds of the past which shuts out of view the duties and demands of the present, than to discourage (especially when a great task is laid upon a nation) such a retrospect of what has already been accomplished as will inspire courage for carrying it through to the end.

The country has lately passed through that trying experience which history shows is sure to come upon a people plunged into a great war, a period when the first popular enthusiasm having died out, the burdens and the bereavements of the war are brought keenly home to all, and a reaction of general despondency results. In this mood of the public mind men forget that while they have suffered the *enemy* also has suffered in an equal or even greater degree, and that too, perhaps, without the same ability to sustain his losses; they forget, while dwelling on their own defeats, that every victory they have won has been an equally sore defeat to the enemy. When this time comes then comes the test of the mettle of a people. If weak they sink under it; but the great-minded rise up stronger for the ordeal.

The feeling of depression which but lately prevailed regarding the seemingly indefinite prolongation of the war, and which is still felt by some, is a singular repetition of an experience which has frequently been felt by other nations conducting a long war. It has often happened that men on the very eve of the conclusion of a war have looked upon it as promising the longest duration; and it will be in the memory of many that just previous to the termination of the Crimean war, even as sagacious an observer as Mr. Cobden had just concluded proving in a pamphlet that it was certain to be prolonged for many years. It thus frequently happens that war, which in its practical execution deals so largely in deception, is itself the greatest of deceptions. When after years, perhaps, of strife, great armies still confront each other, it is hard to penetrate its outlet or issue; but some sudden turn of affairs precipitates the catastrophe long preparing and in the flames of a Waterloo, a Cannæ, or a Pultowa, fabries and systems seemingly firm-rooted and imperishable go out in ashes and nothingness.

At the outbreak of the rebellion the public mind became possessed with illusive anticipations that the war would be a short one—that our victorious columns sweeping the rebels before them in their triumphant path would, in a few months at most, end by precipitating them into the Gulf of Mexico. This was a great delusion no doubt; but it was not more so than that other sentiment which has arisen as the natural reaction after the rude shock this hope received—the error as to the indefinite prolongation of the war. The one fallacy is as pernicious as the other; for if the first was a great bar to the efficient execution of the duty of putting down the rebellion (and there is no doubt that our illusions as to the ease and speediness with which the work would be accomplished was a serious hindrance to the

very preparations needed to *make* it short,) the other is an error equally fatal; *for the paralysis of effort produced by the sentiment of the probable longness of the war is sure to make it much longer than it would otherwise be.* There is no higher duty, therefore, than for patriotic men to fortify themselves and others by the consideration of all the elements of hope and confidence which a retrospect of past progress and a survey of the present situation inspire.

Such a survey justifies the conclusion that the end of the war—the crushing of the armed forces of the rebellion—is not only not far off; but that it is near at hand, and that it is in our power to bring it about almost at a blow.

It will show the outlines of a war continental in its proportions, waged on a theatre equal to the size of all Europe.

It will show armies the greatest the world ever saw, raised and sustained by the spontaneous patriotism of a free people.

It will show how, by the progress of our arms, the area of the rebellion has, step by step, been shorn of three-fourths of its proportions.

It will show the insurgent territory, cut off from communication with the outside world by a blockade which dwarfs any on record, and at the same time the most perfect of any on record.

It will show how every stronghold on the coast has either been captured or is now closely invested.

It will show the interior of this territory cut up by our great lines of conquest, bisected latterally and longitudinally, and the dominion of the confederacy left a kingdom of shreds and patches.

It will show a succession of battles of colossal magnitude, in three-fourths of which the Union arms have triumphed, and all of which, whether victories or reverses, in a purely military point of view, have redounded to the advance of the great cause.

It will show the manhood of a population defending free institutions, vindicating itself against years of the gibes and insolence born of the plantation.

It will show the fighting population of the insurgent States *reduced, by battle, by disease, and by captures, from three-fourths of a million to between a hundred and a hundred and fifty thousand men.*

It will show this force—the forlorn hope of the rebellion—separated by an interval of a thousand miles, divided into two armies, the one of which driven from Chattanooga to Atlanta, has at length been compelled to give up that point, the material capital of the confederacy, while the other is shut up in Richmond, the political capitol of the confederacy.

It will show that the annihilation of both these armies is a mathematical certainty, if we put forth the strength at our command.

It will reveal, finally, as the result of all this, the radient figure of PEACE hovering not afar off, and plainly visible through the cloud of war that still overspreads the land.

If this be the magnificent result which we have to show for the three years of war for the Union, it will give the people of the loyal States a criterion of action in the great issue now before the country—an issue that will determine whether by the maintenance of the Administration under which the war has been conducted to these results, *and which can alone carry it through*, we are willing to crown and justify all that has been done by a Peace that will vindicate and establish forever the unity and integrity of the nation; or whether we shall surrender our destinies into the hands of a party committed to a peace which makes the war for the Union a mockery—a party whose creed throws to the winds all that has been achieved by the toil and blood, the faith and the self-sacrifice of this nation, in the most terrible war in the world's history, whose creed casts disgrace on every soldier under the sod, makes the heroic bones that on a hundred battle fields render the continent sacred the monuments of folly, which makes every sailor that has gone down at his guns for the love of the old flag a fool, and every man who wears the insignia of a glorious wound a poor simpleton; a creed, finally, the delusive peace resulting from which can only be the beginning of unending war.

II.

THE TASK LAID UPON THE ADMINISTRATION BY THE WAR.

When overt war, begun by the firing on Fort Sumter in April, 1861, and brought to a head in the battle of Bull Run in the July following, had fairly inaugurated the rebellion against the constituted authorities of the United States, the Administration found itself committed to a struggle continental in its proportions. The task imposed upon it, as described in President Lincoln's inaugural, was to "*repossess the forts, places and property which had been seized from the Union.*" But to do this it was needed that the embodied power of the Government should sweep armed resistance from the whole territory of the insurgent States. It is the nature of war like that of a conflagration to involve and swallow up everything within its reach. The Southern heart "fired" by a few powerful leaders, plunged into the war with a recklessness akin to madness, and from the Ohio to the gulf, from the Potomac to the Mexican border was all aglow with red-hot rebellion. The Government accepted the task put upon it, for the people willed it, and it was the people's war. Conscious of its strength, arousing itself as a giant from slumber, the nation accepted the gage of war for the Union.

There are, however, certain considerations which, little thought of at the time, entered so deeply into the military problem then presented, have so influenced the course of war and count for so much in a proper estimate of what has been accomplished as to demand immediate statement here. They all go to show that the task of quelling the rebellion was much more difficult than was conceived at the time or than is commonly apprehended even now.

It is a common fallacy in estimating the amount of force the Government could bring to bear on the revolted States to state it merely in the ratio of the population of the two sections—twenty millions in the loyal States against eight in the

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revolting States. But it is proper to consider that the rebels had within themselves a slave population of over four millions, and that this population was able to carry on all their simple industries, which it required more than double that number to carry on the much more complicated industries of northern civilization. It is thus apparent that the whole fighting white population of the South was vailable for service in the field, while nearly half of our own population was necessarily neutralized in the way just mentioned. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the rebel leaders were able to put into the field, at the very start, armies nearly equal to our own, though our own levies were unparalleled in history.

To this must be added the astonishing ascendancy which a small minority of leading men had acquired over the southern population, and by which, when they had once usurped power, they were able to wield an absolutely despotic control over all the resources of men and material in the South. These men, in fact, had long been preparing for this war, as many of them publicly confessed after the inauguration of the rebellion. "We have," said Mr. Barnwell Rhett, in a speech in the convention, which took South Carolina out of the Union, "we have been engaged in this war for more than thirty years. *It is no consequence of Lincoln's election or the failure to execute the fugitive slave law, but we have been engaged in this war for more than thirty years.*" It is a thread-bare story how Buchanan's infamous secretary had, for the last twelve months of that administration, bent all his energies to furnish forth the rebels with all they needed for their premeditated treason. It is a matter of official record that by the robbery of forts and arsenals, and by purchase from abroad, Floyd had distributed at various convenient points throughout the South, 707,000 stands of arms and 200,000 revolvers. Even before Mr. Lincoln's inauguration there were thirty thousand men under arms in the South; and two days after that inauguration the Confederate Congress passed a bill to raise an army of a hundred thousand men And this, bear in mind, was at a time when the United States Government had not under its control an organized force of five thousand men.

To enhance the difficulty of the task imposed on the administration, the theory of the war into which it was driven by the very nature of the contest was that of the *offensive*. Now military history is replete with illustrations of the enormous advantage which a people has when able to stand at bay (covering its own communications and holding interior lines) and await in chosen positions the attacks of the enemy.

The career of Frederick the Great affords an eminent example of a small nation, never able to raise an army of over a hundred thousand men, conducting a defensive war (with offensive returns), and successfully resisting for seven years the attempts of a collision of five of the leading Powers of Europe. But offensive operations against a people holding such defensive attitude becomes ten fold more difficult when the war becomes what is called a "national war," the nature of which is thus depicted by the greatest modern writer on the theory of war, General Jomini:

"The difficulties in the path of an army in national wars are very great, and render the mission of the general conducting them very arduous. The invader has only an army; his adversaries have an army and a people wholly or almost wholly in arms, and making means of resistance out of everything Each individual conspires against the common enemy—even the non-combatants have an interest in his ruin, and accelerate it by every means in their power. Each armed inhabitant knows the smallest paths and connections—he finds everywhere a relative or friend who aids him; the commanders also know the country, and learning immediately the slightest movement on the part of the invader can adopt the best measures to defeat his projects."

These embarrassments, enormously increased by the prodigious extent of the theatre of war, the topography of which is all against the offensive and in favor of the defensive (as witness the immense depth of the lines of communication in any great aggressive movements, the impossibility of supplying our armies from the country as is done in Europe, etc.,) entered into the portentous problem which the administration had to solve; and yet, in the face of this accumulation of difficulties, forming a task the gravest that ever met an Executive, the war has been pushed successfully through to the splendid results we witness—the armies of the rebellion have been driven from the vast extent of territory the rebels claimed till now the one is shut up in the States bordering on the Gulf, and the other is besieged without hope of escape to Richmond.

III.

THE UPRISING OF THE NATION.

The response of the people to the call of President Lincoln for men with which to execute the authority of the Government will always remain one of the grandest manifestations of the spontaneous energy of a free people in the vindication of free institutions. It was then we saw that sublime "uprising" of the people, when all party differences were merged in enthusiastic devotion to the Union—or rather when armed loyalty cowed and quelled secret traitors who, driven to their lurking places, saw the prudence of awaiting some other opportunity to show their hands.

After Bull Run had shown that an arduous and protracted war was before us, Mr. Lincoln issued his proclamation for 300,000 men. The response of the North to the call was without a parallel in the history of the world, and it was soon evident that more troops would be in the field than the act of Congress authorized. Within fifteen days it is estimated that 350,000 volunteers offered themselves in defense of our national flag. And from first to last, under the different calls, more than a MILLION AND A HALF of men have been under arms in the war for the Union. There is in history but one example of a similar uprising of the people in defense of its nationality, and that is the rushing to arms of the French during the great revolution when threatened by the coalition. And yet the comparison only serves to show how far even that fell short of what we have witnessed; for modern historians have proved that, notwithstanding all the exaggerations in regard to the number of men raised by France at that epoch, the figure never exceeded 500,000 men. Yet we have trebled that number.

The task now before the Government was herculean, and such as might have made even Napoleon stand aghast. To raise and fit for the field an army of six hundred thousand men, to be supplied with all the needs of a modern army, and that too without even the skeleton of a veteran force on which to build, was indeed a work of frightful magnitude. And yet this was accomplished in the space of three months—an achievement that has extorted the wonder and admiration of military men throughout the world.

IV.

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE WAR.

As the chief force of the rebellion—the head and front of the offending—was collected in Virginia, it became a necessity to place here an army of proportions fitting it to foil the purpose of the enemy touching the capture of our capital, at the same time to drive the opposing force out of Virginia.

With this view a grand army of over 200,000 men was collected at Washington and placed under command of Major General G. B. McClellan, whose name, from a series of successful minor operations in Western Virginia, which another than he had planned and executed, had acquired a halo that did not properly belong to it. It was not until sometime afterwards that the constitutional *inactivity*, which seems to be a part of General McClellan's nature, and that secret sympathy with treason that has always made him tender of hurting traitors, began to be appreciated, and hence it was that for many months our armies were kept at a dead-lock, thus giving the rebels the opportunity to prepare their plans, and the rebellion its best ally, *time*, and we put in a position of humiliation before the world.

There was one result springing from the presence of our army in Virginia, however, which even the generalship of McClellan could not prevent; it thwarted the realization of those dreams of invasion that had fired the southern imagination. A powerful party of red-hot belligerents had made the carrying of the war into northern soil their rallying cry. Washington was in particular the object of their chief desires, and their direst hate. The Rebel Secretary of War boasted at Montgomery, on the 12th of April, that "the flag which now flaunts the breeze here will float over the dome of the old Capitol at Washington before the 1st of July."

After Bull Run the same ambition fired these men. Said the Richmond *Examiner:* "From the mountain tops and valleys to the shores of the sea there is one wild shout of fierce resolve to capture Washington city at all and every human effort." But this "wild shout of fierce resolve" was vain against the 200,000 bayonets present to defend the capital; and though the early history of our army in Virginia was not of the character the people justly expected and the army eagerly desired, it was at least something, in view of these desperate projects of the rebels, that Washington, by its presence, was rendered *safe*.

But outside of the immediate influence of the McClellan strategy, a series of operations in the western theatre of war had been inaugurated, which laid the foundation of the splendid victories of the Union arms in that quarter. While McClellan, during the winter of 1861-2, kept his magnificent army of two hundred thousand men in inaction, maturing plans which he never matured, the early pages of the history of the war were lit up by a succession of brilliant victories on the Atlantic seaboard and west of the Mississippi river. Christmas of 1861 saw the powerful force of rebels, which had overrun Missouri, insolently proclaiming their purpose of seizing St. Louis, driven down to the Arkansas border. General Grant had begun on a small scale the operations on the Mississippi, destined to swell into campaigns of colossal proportions. The first of our series of coast victories had been gained at Hatteras Inlet, (August 27,) giving us two forts, thirty-six guns, six hundred and nineteen prisoners, and the key to Albemarle sound. This was followed up, at the end of October, by Dupont's exploit at Port Royal, one of the most memorable triumphs on record of ships over forts. The spoils of this victory included not less than fifty cannon.

V.

THE SECOND YEAR OF THE WAR.

The opening of the second year of the war was gilded by two other victories on the coast—the capture of Roanoke Island by a combined attack of our land and naval forces, giving us six forts 2,500 prisoners and forty-two guns, followed up promptly by the capture of Newbern, which added six other forts and thirty-four heavy guns. These conquests restored the sovereignty of the flag over all the inland waters of North Carolina, which, up to this time, had been the main resort of the whole crew of blockade runners. Another brilliant point in the chain of coast victories was added by the reduction and capitulation of Fort Pulaski following. With the fort were surrendered forty-seven guns and 360 prisoners. This gave us the control of the mouth of the Savannah river.

Turning to the great theatre of war between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi, the spring of 1862 saw there the inauguration of a combination of magnificent operations by several distinct columns drawn out from the Ohio to the mouth of the Mississippi, and destined to carry their conquests into the very heart of the confederacy and reclaim the valley of the Mississipi to the sovereignty of the Union.

The rebel line of defense on this frontier extended from Columbus, a powerfully intrenched camp on the Mississipi, eastward to the Alleghany mountains. About midway was Bowling Green, another intrenched camp, where Albert Sidney Johnson commanded in person. East, towards the mountains, was Zollicoffer with a large force, where early in the winter he had taken up a fortified position on the Cumberland river near Mill Spring.

Against this line of defense Grant and the gunboats under Foote were preparing to move on the west; Buell was advancing on Bowling Green in the centre, while Thomas was in motion on the east near the mountains. Thomas struck the first

blow and gave the country the firstlings of victory in the west. On the 19th of January he engaged the rebels at Mill Spring, defeated and routed them with the loss of their artillery, their intrenched position, and their general, Zollicoffer, killed. The effect of this victory was to expose the whole rebel right flank by way of East Tennessee.

On the left flank Grant and Foote were moving to break the rebel lines of defenses by the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers. It was clearly seen that, could these rivers be forced, the great rebel strongholds at Columbus and Bowling Green would be taken in reverse and their evacuation made a matter of absolute compulsion. But these rivers were barred by two strong works—Fort Henry on the Tennessee and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland. The former fell a prey to the gallantry of Foote's naval attack, surrendering on the 6th of February, with its armament of sixty guns.

A week after the surrender of Fort Henry, General Grant drew his lines of investment around Fort Donelson, and after a conflict running through four days and nights, and rendered memorable by the hardest fighting that had yet occurred in the war, the rebels were forced to accede to General Grant's demands for that "unconditional surrender" which has become so inseparably associated with his name. The surrender included 15,000 prisoners and forty pieces of artillery.

The fall of Forts Donelson and Henry promptly produced its anticipated effect. Columbus, which the rebels had styled the "Gibraltar of America," was immediately abandoned. At the same time Johnston evacuated his intrenched position at Bowling Green and falling back to Nashville, or rather *through* Nashville (for the opening of the Cumberland to our gunboats, which resulted from the fall of the fort, made Nashville untenable), General Buell, whose army had been threatening the rebel force at Bowling Green, immediately followed up and took possession of that city. Thus it was that by the magnificent series of successes that illustrated the spring of 1862, the rebel line on a stretch of over five hundred miles was pushed back from the Ohio to the Cumberland, and the whole State of Kentucky and a third of Tennessee were recovered to the dominions of the Union.

Simultaneous with these operations the waters of the Mississippi were lit up by the splendors of Farragut's astonishing combat below New Orleans with the forts, gunboats, steam rams, floating batteries, fire rafts, obstructions, booms and chains which the rebels had prepared for the defense of the great metropolis of the gulf, ending in the fall of that city, whose capture the London *Times*, doubting, with its usual cynicism, its possibility, had declared would be "putting the tournequet on the main artery of the confederacy."

After their retreat from Columbus the rebels under Polk took up a new position on the Mississippi at Island No. 10. This stronghold was able for many weeks to hold out against all the operations directed against it, till finally the gunboats run the gauntlet of the batteries, and the stronghold, with a hundred heavy guns, fell into our hands. From this point they fell back to Memphis only to be compelled to abandon that city, which in June following came under control of the Union forces.

After the retreat of the central army of the rebellion from Nashville, it took up a strongly fortified position at Corinth, under Beauregard. There he was besieged by the Union army under Halleck, whose siege operations, pushed on to such a point as to make the capture of the whole force a matter of high probability, compelled the evacuation of this position also.

The result of the victories of 1862 was thus to leave the situation in this gratifying position: Butler was at New Orleans, Curtis was pushing his way to Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas, the chief points on the coast were in our hands, Halleck was at Corinth, the Union flag waved over Memphis and Nashville, while Mitchell, in Alabama, was advancing from victory to victory.

This was glory enough for one year, for if we turn our eye to the theatre of war in the East, we are presented with the spectacle of a campaign towards Richmond, in which the finest qualities of heroism in the army, gaining victories wherever it met the armed enemy, and driving him back to his capital were neutralized and rendered fruitless by the imbecility of its head. Turning upon McClellan, Lee terminated the offensive campaign by himself assuming the initiative, and carrying his army for the first time into the territory of the loyal States. The issue was at length tried out at Antietam, where the absence of directing generalship could not prevent our soldiers from winning a victory, of which their commander had not the capacity to take advantage. Nevertheless, the first invasion of the rebels ended disastrously by their retreat into Virginia.

VI.

THE THIRD YEAR OF THE WAR—THE BATTLE SUMMER.

The first day of the third year of the war (1863) was signalized by the battle of Stone river or Murfreesboro, fought by Gen. Rosecrans, on the Union side, and by Bragg on the part of the rebels. The most desperate battle of the war up to that period, it inaugurated the year of great actions by an engagement which resulted in placing our army in Murfreesboro, with the prodigious loss to the enemy of 14,560 men. This was to be followed up from this base by a brilliant campaign in Tennessee, destined to culminate in the possession of Chattanooga, which had long been recognized by military heads as the key to the whole theatre of war in the West.

In the meantime, Gen. Grant was drawing his lines of investment around the last great stronghold of the rebels on the Mississippi, at Vicksburg. After many attempts against this point, he finally, by an audacious stroke of strategy, unparalleled save by Napoleon's passage of the Splugen, crossed his army over the Mississippi at Grand Gulf, and, dividing the army of Johnston from the possibility of reinforcing the garrison at Vicksburg, beat the rebels in half a dozen battles, and ended by throwing his army as a besieging

force around this position. The siege of Vicksburg will take its place in history, as among the most wonderful engineering operations on record. It was crowned by its unconditional surrender, on the 4th of July, with 31,720 prisoners and 234 guns. At the same time, the garrison at Port Hudson surrendered to Gen. Banks, thus adding 7,000 prisoners and 40 pieces of artillery to the account. The effect of these two victories was to restore the national authority along the whole vast stretch of the Mississippi, and that great continental highway was thrown open to its embouchure in the Gulf of Mexico.

At the very time that the right wing of our immense line of battle, stretching from the Potomac to the Mississippi, was thus engaged, its left wing, the army of the Potomac, was manœuvering to meet Lee's second invasion of the loyal States. The rebel army was brought to bay at length at Gettysburg, where a three days' battle, the most colossal of the war was fought, ending in the utter defeat of Lee, who was fain again to make good his retreat into Virginia, with a loss of 23,000 in killed and wounded and 6,000 prisoners.

The centre of our great line, held by General Rosecrans, was at the same time on the advance. By a beautiful series of flanking movements, that commander drove Bragg from his two powerfully entrenched positions at Shelbyville and Tullahoma, and advancing from this point, planted his army, at one splendid stroke, in the central citadel of the South—Chattanooga.

On the coast, the operations were being pushed on with equal vigor. Gen. Gillmore had effected a landing on Morris Island, whence, with his long range siege guns, he was able to batter down Fort Sumter, leaving that memorable stronghold, whose reduction by the rebels was the first overt act of the war a mass of ruins. Assisted by the co-operation of the iron clad fleet, the works on Morris Island—Forts Wagner and Gregg—were also reduced, and they with their armament fell into our hands. The possession of Morris Island has enabled our fleet ever since to keep up a blockade of Charleston, which hermetically seals that place.

Leaving out of view the single exception of that brief period during which the Napoleonic war involved all Europe in its conflagration, you will search all history in vain for a parallel of that great battle summer, whether as respects the vastness of the theatre of war, the proportions of the contending forces, or the substantial greatness of the results. During a single period of thirty days, embraced in this titanic epoch, not less than sixty thousand prisouers were captured. The losses to the enemy in this respect, added to his prodigious sacrifices in killed and wounded, left the Confederacy at the close of the year bleeding, prostrate and exhausted.

VII.

THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE WAR.

The opening of the fourth year of the war saw the forces of the rebellion driven from the whole circumference of the Confederacy, and brought to definite points in two armies—the army of Bragg on the mountain ridges south of Chattanooga, and the army of Lee on the Rapidan. The former assailed by Gen. Grant in his mountain fastnesses, saw himself driven from his stronghold, and his army broken and routed in the most disastrous defeat since Waterloo. He left in our hands 10,000 prisoners and 60 guns, suffered a loss of 8,000 in killed and wounded, and sought shelter for his shattered forces by a disordered retreat to Dalton.

This review brings the catalogue of Union victories up to the time of the commencement of the great campaign of this summer, the events of which are too fresh in the memory of all to require any detailed recital.

During the early days of May, the two grand armies of the Union, under the supreme control of the Lieutenant-General commanding all the armies of the United States, began their advance, the one from Chattanooga, the other from the Rapidan.

Gen. Sherman, after an advance from Chattanooga, over a hundred miles, marked by a series of brilliant manœuvres and actions, in which the enemy's forces were driven from a succession of strongholds, looked upon as impregnable, at length planted his army in front of Atlanta. Here he was thrice assailed by an enemy willing to lavish everything in desperate efforts to drive him back.

The enemy thrice met a bloody repulse. Sherman now began working slowly but surely 'round on the rebel communications, not with a view to take Atlanta simply, but for the purpose of capturing the rebel army—a result from which Hood has only been saved by a precipitate flight from Atlanta—thus abandoning the foremost city of the Southwest, and the important communications it commands. In the engagement which resulted in this brilliant success, the rebels lost two thousand prisoners, and very heavily in killed and wounded. It may now be safely said that Hood's force, as an *army*, no longer exists.

In this great campaign General Sherman has put *hors du combat* over forty thousand men, that is, more than half the army opposed to him, besides effecting great captures in men and *material*.

General Grant has planted his army before Petersburgh and on the communications of Richmond, after a campaign of even greater magnitude, marked by the most terrible and continuous fighting on record. During its progress he has gained a dozen victories, any one of which would have sealed the fate of any European war. Its course has been marked by the constant use of those double instruments of war—strategy, and what Wellington called "hard pounding;" by the former he has driven the enemy, by bloodless victories on our part, from six chosen lines of defense; by the latter he has put out of the way between fifty and sixty thousand of the fighting veterans of the South. In addition he has taken over twenty-five thousand prisoners, and a prodigious number of guns. He is certain, ere long, to crown his work by the capture of the rebel capital, and the destruction of the main rebel army.

Finally, while the situation is as thus presented at the main points of war, the progress of our arms by land and sea shows equal lustre wherever

they meet the foe. It is but the other day that Admiral Farragut capped the climax of his great achievements by the capture of the forts guarding the entrance to Mobile bay, the destruction or capture of the enemy's powerful fleet in those waters—thus sweeping away, it is believed, the last vestige of rebel naval power on the coast of the Atlantic and the Gulf. From the high seas, too, the rebel naval power has been swept. It is but the other day that its most formidable embodiment, the *Alabama*, was sent to the bottom by the *Kearsarge*, affording a significant lesson both to the rebels and to the British allies who have furnished them with that and other proofs of their material support.

VIII.

GROUNDS OF COURAGE AND CONFIDENCE.

After such a retrospect of the glorious achievements of our army and navy, have we not a right to ask, with some emphasis, of those who complain of the slow progress of the war, and fear its indefinite prolongation, what substantial ground they have for their repining? It is true the course of the war has not been an uninterrupted succession of victories; it has presented the chequered aspect of successes and reverses which all wars present. But we ask any dispassionate observer, looking at the war by the map, and in the fiery characters in which it is writ all over the continent—contrasting the rebellion at the start with the rebellion where it now stands—surveying this great struggle for the Union in its solid and substantial *results*—we ask such an observer to point out in the annals of war where *more* has been done in the same period. He will find it hard to point out where *as much* has been done! It is the common practice we know in war of popular Governments for men to belittle what has been done, to criticise and complain; but we ask in all seriousness, is it the part of dignity or of patriotism, in this crisis of our nation's struggle, to depreciate its grand and providential achievements?

There is, to a people battling in any cause, a force, purely metaphysical in its character, which is yet stronger than the sinews of war—stronger than the sinews of men's arms. It is *courage*. Never has it been more needed than of late, when a fatal paralysis has benumbed the public sense, and in the eclipse of faith, "the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those that love the twilight, flutter about, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms."

I believe we have already touched the nadir of our fears and our despondency, and that a breath of patriotism and hope is now vivifying the national pulse. But each man can swell the rising tide. To diffuse the inspiration of courage, is the duty of every patriot. And happily we need draw this inspiration from no illusive fountains; for the more earnestly and honestly we look at the situation, the more grounds of hope we find. Some of these grounds can be briefly set down:

1. The body of the rebellion is moribund. Gen. T. Seymour, whose critical habit of thought and conservative temper, add a prodigious weight to any declarations he makes on this head, states as the result of his three months' observation in the interior of the South, that "*the rebel cause is fast failing from exhaustion.*" This is profoundly true, whether it has regard to the material resources in the South, or to the still more vital resources in men, of which the field is now reaped and bare. Every man and every boy is now in the field; there is nothing behind. In a private letter lately written by General Grant, he used the pungent expression that the rebels have "*robbed the cradle and the grave to reinforce their armies.*"

2. It is true, in inflicting on the rebels the immense damage they have received in the great campaigns of Grant and Sherman, we also have lost quite as severely—perhaps even more so; but (if it is lawful to speak thus of so grave a matter) *we can afford it.* We can stand to lose man for man, till every man in the armies of the rebellion is put *hors du combat*, and leave behind a force equal to all we have lost in the war.

3. But I do not believe it will be needful to wade through such an ocean of blood as this. All that is needed is a blow that will disrupt the two main rebel armies. It is worthy of note, that the merciless conscriptions that have swept over the South have even simplified the problem for us. The war has no longer those thousand-fold embarrassments that attend a *national* war, or war on population. There *is* no population. Our task is confined to beating the armies at Richmond and Atlanta. For the rest, the southern people are tired of the war, and are sighing for peace.

4. In a military point of view, such is the situation held by Gen. Grant and Gen. Sherman, toward the insurgent forces opposed to them, that the reinforcements they are receiving, will certainly enable them soon to complete their work. Gen. Seymour on this head says:

> "There is but one course consistent with safety or honor. Let the people awake to a sense of their dignity and strength, and a few months of comparatively trifling exertion—of such effort as alone is worthy of the great work—and the rebellion will crumble before us. Fill this draft promptly and willingly, with good and true men; send a few spare thousands over rather than under the call, and the *summer sun of* 1865 *will shine upon a regenerated land.*"

5. The war is really near its close. The present front of the rebellion, menacing though it be, is really nothing more than a mask, concealing the hollowness and rottenness within. The South is literally exhausted—exhausted of that without which it is impossible to carry on war—exhausted of men. The field, in the impressive expression of Napoleon regarding France after her three conscriptions, is reaped down to the stubble. Out of an available fighting population of upwards of three quarters of a million with which the war was inaugurated, they have saved an effective force of one hundred or one hundred and fifty thousand men. The rest are in their graves, in the hospitals, disabled, or prisoners in our hands. These are the forlorn hope of the rebellion.

6. Our territorial conquests have reclaimed three-fourths of the area originally claimed in the limits of the Confederacy. The Confederacy stands now thrice dissected—its great lines of communication cut or in our hands. Besides, its

resources of all kinds are all but exhausted. The desperate men at its head may continue the struggle for some time longer—they may for a while oppose a formidable front to our blows—but the rebellion is doomed. Its struggles will be the frantic final efforts of the gladiator before he falls down exhausted and exanimate.

7. The leaders of the rebellion have ceased to see any hope for their cause in the arena of war. *They are looking now to the arena of politics.* A party has been set up whose creed and aims have their entire sympathy and moral support. The platform of that party has nothing but expressions of contumely for the sacred war the recital of which has been made; for Jeff. Davis and his crew it has nothing but expressions of sympathy and respect. The people of the North have now before them the momentous question of determining by their action whether they will justify all the precious blood shed in this war by carrying it triumphantly through and crowning it with a glorious and honorable peace, or whether by a base surrender they will project it into history as the monument of a nation's folly.

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